

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 21, 2019

Hon. Nita M. Lowey
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Richard C. Shelby
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-146A, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Lowey, Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Granger, and Vice Chairman Leahy:

When the House of Representatives and the Senate meet to reconcile the differences between their versions of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2020, we respectfully ask you to provide the highest level of funding feasible for Venezuela under the Economic Support Fund (ESF).

As you know, the House version of the bill (H.R. 2839), as approved by the Appropriations Committee, provided \$17.5 million in ESF for Venezuela, the same as the Fiscal Year 2019 enacted level. During floor consideration of the bill, an amendment was offered to increase that funding by \$3 million, to \$20.5 million, and that amendment was approved. See Amendment #101 to H.R. 2740 (Reps. Murphy, Shalala, and Soto). The Senate version of the bill (S. 2583) would provide \$30 million in ESF for Venezuela. We hope both chambers will agree to a final bill that provides the highest level of funding possible for this critically-important cause.

The situation in Venezuela is a political, economic, and humanitarian crisis, and the regime of Nicolas Maduro is responsible. The citizens of Venezuela are suffering, and millions have migrated to other countries, including many to our congressional districts. ESF for Venezuela will sustain and strengthen USAID and State Department programs to empower the people of Venezuela—defending human rights, strengthening civil society, improving governance, supporting independent media, and promoting fair and transparent elections.

We thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress



Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Donna E. Shalala
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress

cc: Hon. Harold Rogers, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

Hon. Lindsey Graham, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs